

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change

Questions proposed by Daniel Scharf MRTPI for OCC witnesses that are reasonably necessary in order to provide an accurate assessment of the climate risks implied by the building of the new road

Mr Chris Landsborough ICE

1.11 “I confirm that the evidence that I have prepared concerning the Inquiries is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institutions, the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).

The IEMA public position is that, “Mitigating for and adapting to climate change is a key focus ...we seek to distil and share best practice in this area, with insights from a range of sectors, to enable IEMA members to tackle climate change in their work and personal life.”

APPGI -ICE policy paper 6 Feb- *What are the public behavioural changes required to meet net zero* sets out recommendations, “... to help the public make the necessary behavioural changes required to get to net zero, focusing on home heating and transport.” and• This [policy] framework should focus on how net zero’s up-front and operational costs can be reduced to assist the public in making net zero behaviour changes.”

Q 1. Should the inspector and Secretary of State both infer from these affiliations/memberships that new road building is supported by the ICE and IEMA and would be compatible with transitioning out of the climate crisis?

There are two main differences between the evidence given by Daniel Scharf and the OCC case (ie Messrs Landsborough and Greep).

- (i) is it likely that the upfront carbon emitted in the building of the road will be offset by the carbon emissions avoided through reduced congestion?, and
- (ii) is any increase in carbon emissions significant?

Q.2 Does the CL estimate of the claimed potential savings of carbon emissions arising from the new road take account of either,

- (i) the increase in traffic from the new residential and employment building and that induced by the increase in road capacity?
 - (ii) behavioural changes, including those recommended by the APPGI/ICE report: road user charging, workplace parking levy, lower speed limits, electrification, car sharing, automation, public transport, active travel Including E-bikes, and working from home, or the Government’s Transport Decarbonisation Plan?
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The current level of CO₂e in the atmosphere is about 425ppm. This time last year it was 420ppm. When HIF1 was devised it was closer to 400ppm. The global warming is around 1.5 degrees C and higher than climate scientists have been predicting (see EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service and Guardian report 17 February 2024 submitted by Daniel Scharf)

Q.3 Do you agree that the carbon concentrations and global temperature represent 'material changes in circumstances' since when the road scheme was prepared? And what would be the levels of atmospheric carbon and global temperature rise have to be before you/OCC would withdraw support for the upfront emissions from new road building?

All constituent councils have declared climate emergencies:

OCC "We are committed to enabling a net-zero Oxfordshire well ahead of 2050."

VWHDC "Our climate action targets are: to become carbon neutral within our own operations by 2030, with an aim for a 75 per cent reduction in our emissions by 2025 and for the Vale to a carbon neutral district by 2045,

SODC "a pledge to become a carbon neutral council by 2025 and a carbon neutral district by 2030.

Q.4 Which of these carbon budgets do you believe the upfront carbon emissions associated with the road building to be consistent with? And would OCC withdraw support for the road if the emissions were found to comply only by 2050?

Evidence given by Daniel Scharf refers to the Scientists for Global Responsibility report on a Fair Lifestyles Budget (2.5 tonnes per person per year by 2030 and then reduce further for 50% chance of keeping warming below 1.5degrees C).

Q.5 Do you accept that the scientists' recommendation is "Zero car ownership and up to 950 km car travel (e.g. taxi, car club, lift-share), on average shared with one other person."? How would this impact on the need for a new road?

CL refers to statements made by Daniel Scharf (29 Sep 2023) [CD N.12] (paragraphs 3.03 and 4.03)

- the extent to which the Scheme is consistent with the area's development plan must be balanced with carbon budgets and targets,
- it would be "surprising" (if not perverse) if the secretary of state gave the Scheme precedence over "low carbon ways of maintaining accessibility across the local area and region",
- greater planning weight should be given to the Scheme's embodied carbon impacts over the identified emission savings associated with operational carbon in the medium and long term.

- the Scheme's embodied carbon will have a greater climate impact than emissions mitigated by less congestion, of which he considers future congestion to be ever-increasingly comprised of low-carbon and/or neutral tailpipes
- he has yet to see an adequate or reliable assessment of these fundamental matters (linked to future congestion/ operational emissions) e.g. impacts of lower speeds, changes to vehicle technology, ownership patterns, automation, modal-shift, and working patterns He has now added workplace parking levy being looked at by OCC, road user charging considered by APPGI/ICE and the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

The OCC/CL conclusion was that "Objections to the Orders that have been raised in relation to Climate are without merit, do not give rise to any reason to refuse the grant of planning permission."

Q.6 Is this a claim that all the objectors, including Daniel Scharf, are carbon illiterate; that all the evidence produced to show the likelihood that the building of a new road will significantly increase carbon in the atmosphere should be completely ignored by both inspector and Secretary of State?

Q.7 But, if the objections have some merit – what is it?

Mr Bernard Greep MRTPI

Q.1 In what way has OCC approached the Scheme on a basis of "Vision Led Provision - for Transport and Place Investment" AKA Vision and Validate/ Decide and Provide /Manage and Monitor) and NOT 'predict and provide'?

GL 'In summary, the development would lead to an overall carbon saving as a result of a reduction in traffic congestion and is unlikely to cause any significant effects on climate.'

Q.2 Is this assessment in accordance with the RTPI guidance and advice to the Committee on Climate Change included in Daniel Scharf's proof?

Q.3 In which way if any do you take issue with Daniel Scharf's representation of agreed upfront emissions and possible but uncertain offsetting by reduced operational emissions?

Q. 4 Do you still subscribe to the view, " that the Representations and Objections based on Climate are "...without merit ...and do not give any reason to refuse planning permission."?

Q.5 If they have some merit, what is it?